
ZMAGAZINE ST-REPORT JUNE 1987 ISSUE 1
PUBLISHER/EDITOR: RON KOVACS: ASSISTANT PUBLISHER-KEN KIRCHNER + SUSAN PERRY

Xx Publishers Page

With this issue we start a monthly edition of ST news and information, including reviews, commentary etc. Just as with the weekly issues of the regular Zmag's, we will take the best articles and even articles which haven't made it to publication. This issue has also been written in 80 column format for our ST readers.

Xx ZMAG USER GROUP OF THE MONTH JUNE.....Rhode Island Atari Computer
Enthusiasts RI ACE.....

You can become a member of RI ACE by sending a check or money order to:

RI ACE
c/o Steve Dunphy
192 Webster Ave.
Cranston, R.I.

The dues are \$20.00 yearly. 24 hr BBS # 401-521-4234 in Prov. R.I.

Xx ZMAG ST SOFTWARE REVIEWS

By:James Delson

Borrowed Time
Activision
2350 Bayshore Parkway
Mountain View, CA 94043
(415) 960-0410

PRICE: \$30-\$50

RATINGS:

Overall performance: Good
Documentation: Average
Play system: Good
Graphics quality: Excellent
Ease of use: Difficult
Value for money: Good

The city's a lonely place for a private eye, especially when you've got assorted torpedos out there waiting for the chance to air condition your skull.

But if your job's solving crimes, the risks come with the territory. In this text/graphic detective tale, your moniker's Sam Harlow. From the moment your tired tootsies first appear on your desk, you're in for more trouble than a cat

in a dog pound. You've got seven cases open, and if you're good, I mean real good, you just might be able to solve 'em all before some slug from a .45 buys you the farm.

If you can solve all seven cases in 24 hours, you're the leading gumshoe everyone thinks you are. But one false step and you're deader than last week's meatloaf. Try talking to people, following leads all over town.

Collect evidence, no matter how unimportant it might seem. And soon the pieces will fall together. You'll need smarts to solve the mystery, and there's plenty of action here, too, so move fast, keep your eyes open, and don't forget to use a map.

Xx ZMAG ATARI REPORT...Press Releases from CompuServe...

THE ATARI PC: THE FIRST IBM PC-COMPATIBLE WITH BUILT-IN EGA

The Atari PC is the first IBM PC compatible with built-in EGA (enhanced graphics adapter).

The new computer has more power and features than the IBM PC, said Sam Tramiel, president of Atari. Designed around the Intel 8088 chip, the switchable system performs at either 4.77 or 8.0 megahertz and has 512 kilobytes of memory, expandable on the motherboard to 640 kilobytes.

It is the first IBM PC-compatible product that includes support for the EGA graphics mode as a standard feature. Other graphics modes supported by the custom-designed graphics chip are CGA, IBM monochrome and the Hercules graphics card. The Atari PC has built in a Centronics parallel port for printers and an RS232 serial port for modems and serial printers.

It will be sold with a detachable IBM-style keypad, a mouse and mouse port and will be bundled with the GEM desktop from Digital Research.

The Atari PC will be sold through mass merchants and computer specialty stores.

The Atari PC system including a computer, disk drive and monochrome monitor is priced at \$699. The computer and disk drive will sell for \$499.

Xx NEW PRODUCT NEWSWIRENew Epyx Products...Internal ST Clock.....

In an effort to reach a broader market of computers and video game systems, Epyx has released versions of their popular 500XJ joystick for the Apple II, the IBM PC, the Sega Master System, and the Nintendo Entertainment System.

All of the new units have the same hand-held styling and features of the original 500XJ (for the Atari and Commodore computers). The only two visual differences are (obviously) the type of connector used and the color of the box

(C-64/Atari is red, Apple/IBM is blue, Sega is yellow, and Nintendo is green).

List price for the Atari/Commodore, Sega, and Nintendo joysticks is \$19.95. The Apple/IBM controller can be bought for \$39.95. Epyx has also gotten into the floppy disk market by releasing its own line of premium 5.25" and 3.5"

computer disks. The 5.25" disks (DSDD only) are list priced at \$9.95 for a pack of 10 (also included are reenforced hub rings, Tyvek sleeves, labels, and write-protect tabs). The 3.5" disks (also sold in packs of 10) run for \$24.95 (SSDD) and \$29.95 (DSDD).

EPYX, INC.
1043 Kiel Court
Sunnyvale, CA 94089

TransTech Industries is offering a \$25 internal, ten-year real-time clock for the Atari ST line. Sold as a commodity component (the clock is actually the Dallas Semiconductor DS1216E, an industry-standard component found in many clocks today), the clock fits underneath a ROM chip inside the 520ST/1040ST.

The clock is being sold under the name of "SmartWatch". According to TransTech, the user of the clock is entirely responsible for all physical damage to the SmartWatch or to the computer during use (or during installation). A fairly good understanding of electronics is necessary to install the clock, and TransTech won't do it for you. Your local Atari dealer will probably install it for you for another \$20.

Software is NOT packaged with the SmartWatch. Instead, it is being released as a public domain TD.ARC file (available on BBS's, GENie, and CompuServe). This allows for easy upgrades to the software and (they hope) for a greater market range.

A special installation kit (the "EZ-Kit") for the 1040ST can be bought for another \$15 and saves you the trouble of having to cut a small metal bracket. Special discounts (5%-10%) are available if bought in quantity.

TRANSTECH INDUSTRIES
P.O. Box 880668
10509 S.D. Mission Rd.
San Diego, CA 92108

Xx CES REPORTS--ANTIC PUBLISHING INC., COPYRIGHT 1987 REPRINTED BY PERMISSION.

By:NAT FRIEDLAND, ANTIC EDITOR

* The ST has yet another new wave of remarkable and mind boggling products on the way. Within our first hour at CES we saw a 4-megabyte memory board that goes into any ST without soldering, and the Hybrid Arts ADAP Soundrack CD-quality stereo sampling and editing system that competes with the vastly more expensive Synclavier and Fairlight in high-end MIDI.

ANOTHER ST BONANZA

This CES had another dazzling array of ST computer products on display. We'll be looking at a lot more of them in our later reports. During just our first hours around the crowded Atari area, here's what we found that seemed especially impressive:

Micro D of Canada was showing a prototype 2/4Mb memory upgrade board that is supposed to install inside any ST without soldering. The Data-Free Board will sell for \$159 without RAM chips. The 4-megabyte upgrade requires 32 chips and the 2Mb takes 16. The chips cost \$30 each from Micro D or you can shop for a better price on your own.

Hybrid Arts, the king of Atari MIDI developers, was showing their \$1995 ADAP Soundtrack digital sampling system, which will be on sale in July. ADAP offers the sound quality of compact disks -- in true stereo if you get a dual hardware setup. On a stage in the Atari area, ADAP was in action -- effortlessly pulling selected portions off any tape and manipulating the sound in real-time with a simple visual interface. Sounds could be played back in reverse, cut and pasted, stretched, faded and otherwise manipulated, as fast as you could click a mouse.

Frank Foster of Hybrid Arts told Antic that Tom Hudson is looking into the ADAP math co-processor box for speeding up certain math-intensive operations of his graphics software (DEGAS, CAD-3D) such as ray tracing.

Springboard was showing their little -publicized ST conversion of Certificate Maker at the Atari booth.

Shelbourne Software's 3D Breakthrough, the first ST game using the Stereotek 3D Glasses, was a spectacular sight. You move through an elaborate maze by shooting your way through flashy barriers. The disk will also include a non-3D version that doesn't require glasses.

ST COMING ATTRACTIONS

What looked like a very powerful and easy-handling 2-D drafting and drawing program was being demonstrated by Xetec of Salina, Kansas (makers of the Grafix AT which has been reviewed in Antic). SCAD gives you pages for 16 ST drawings in RAM. All commands can be operated from GEM or from the keyboard. The \$99.95 program is due in September and will not be copy-protected. Page sizes can be defined as large as 32 X 32 inches and many powerful graphics editing tools are built-in. SCAD can convert images into DEGAS format. We'll also be reviewing Xetec's new Printer Enhancer, a \$249.95 buffer/switcher with 8 built-in type fonts.

A software team from Venezuela was showing MasterCAD 3-D, a \$199.95 program that converts any 2-D image into real 3-D and seems quite easy to operate. The current version requires 1Mb and monochrome. Final U.S. distribution is still being set.

Passport Designs, a leading MIDI software house, is rushing to convert its first ST product -- Master Tracks Pro, a high-powered, user-friendly 64-track sequencer that has been winning rave reviews on the Macintosh this spring. The

Passport CES team told Antic that three out of four visitors to their booth wanted this product on the ST instead of the Mac.

Computereyes, a 1986 Antic Award Winner, is being shown at CES in an inexpensive \$149.95 monochrome version (it can produce gray scales on the color monitor). This is the latest Atari video digitizer from Digital Vision. Their ST color unit will be reviewed in the August 1987 issue of Antic.

Another specialized new use for the ST is to run a graphics database for serious chessplayers. SciSys of London is showing two versions of ST ChessBase

-- the software that current World Champion Garry Kasparov has been using to prepare himself for tournaments. With Chessbase Sr., every recent tournament game of an upcoming opponent can be fed into the database and instantly examined from a vast variety of viewpoints to pinpoint potential weak points of play. You can see how an opponent reacts to any standard style of opening or strategy. ChessBase Jr. works with the expensive Leonardo world-class chess computer and the ST. U.S. distribution for all these products was being finalized at CES.

An add-on to PrintMaster Plus, the Print Shop workalike from Unison World, will be a Fonts and Borders disk. Price is not yet set.

GAME GALLERY

Microprose had a customized Link Trainer "flying" on the CES floor as it was piloted with the new Gunship helicopter simulation. The ST version is still under development.

Mindscape, which hosted a Sunday rock oldies concert for 1,000 (Bo Diddley, Sam & Dave) showed two \$29.95 ST color games designed in England. Q-Ball is a 3-D billiards game played inside a cube where you can adjust the gravity and line up your shots off any wall. Plutos is a shootout where your rocket flies over the scrolling surface of the huge enemy mothership and attempts to destroy it.

From England's Psygnosis, creators of the visually awesome graphic adventure game Brataccas, comes another lushly-detailed extravaganza. Barbarian moves a Conan-type hero through an a vast, scrolling underground kingdom --color only --where monsters and hordes of enemy guards must be overcome on every screen.

Electronic Arts is starting to crank out some ST titles too. An enhanced version of Music Construction Set --with MIDI -- is due in July for \$39.95. Other new features are direct waveform editing and a jukebox playback mode.

EA has also taken over distribution of the First Byte talking ST software. First releases are MathTalk, a flashy arithmetic drill for youngsters, and a talking computer version of Mad Libs, the popular series of humor books where you add inappropriate words to prepared storylines.

Still more from Electronic Arts, a kind of super- Diplomacy strategy game called Empire, where you conquer weaker parts of the world and force them to build weapons and raise new armies for your war machine. But your enemies are just as ruthless, and you can also start the game by re-drawing the map of the world to suit your own tastes.

Logical Design Works has a whole line of fast-moving ST gambling simulations for \$34.95 each. Vegas Gambler combines blackjack, roulette, slot machine and poker machine. Other titles available are Vegas Craps and Club Backgammon.

From Canada Jagware is making its ST debut with Alien Fires, a color-only 3-D space maze arriving this summer.

Avatex, well-known for its low-priced Hayes-compatible modems, now has a speedy 2400 baud unit. List price is \$319 but previous Avatex modems have been dramatically discounted.

We ran into some offbeat items for souvenir-hungry Atarians. Classic Covers offers protective covers for Atari computers, monitors, disk drives and printers -- all emblazoned with a big golden fuji symbol and the Atari name.

Another company was showing credit-card-sized pocket calculators featuring the fuji and Atari name.

By the way, Atari used the CES opening to announce that they had a 45% increase in first quarter sales this year -- \$65.1 million -- and they were making a 2-for-1 stock split. This news bumped up the price of Atari stock by about \$5, to over \$30 per share.

Xx New ST Products--ANTIC PUBLISHING INC. COPYRIGHT 1987 REPRINT PERMISSION.

By:GREGG PEARLMAN, ANTIC ASSISTANT EDITOR

PIRACY ON THE HIGH SEAS

Yo ho ho -- Pirates of the Barbary Coast puts you on a trading frigate in the late 18th century. You're the captain, and you're searching for the ruthless Bloodthroat -- who has your daughter in his oily grasp. In order to raise the ransom and rescue her, you must trade in the various Barbary Coast seaport towns. Along the way, you also might find buried treasure on one of four possible islands. The only thing missing is a bottle of rum and a parrot shrieking "Pieces of eight!"

\$24.95
TDC Distributors Inc.
Starsoft Development
3331 Bartlett Blvd.
Orlando, FL 32811.
(305) 423-1987.

FROM KASPAROV TO SARGON

Chessmaster 2000, with more than 71,000 opening positions, contains the largest opening move library available for a computer chess game. The game provides 12 levels of play, teach and hint modes, and the ability to retract moves -- all the way back to the beginning of the game.

The Chessmaster 2000 library contains 100 famous games, such as the Kasparov/Karpov championships or even the Chessmaster 2000 vs. Sargon III battle of 1986.

\$44.95
Electronic Arts
1820 Gateway Drive
San Mateo, CA 94404
(415) 571-7171

THREE FROM REEVE

The ASCII- and DEGAS-compatible News Station ST (\$34.95) features text entry and graphics modes, clip art, an undo command and adjustable margins and line spacing. Disk Master (\$29.95) features a powerful sector editor, backup utility, custom formatter and a graphics display that shows you exactly what your disk drive sees. Finally, colorful graphics and realistic action on a 3-D

ice rink is what you can expect in World Class Hockey.

(\$29.95)

Reeve Software
29W150 Old Farm Lane
Warrenville, IL 60555
(312) 393-2317.

A MILLION FROM MICHTRON

GFA Draft (\$99.50), a two-dimensional CAD program, makes it easy to create circuits, scaled drawings and detailed plans. You can have 255 drawing layers (and display up to 10 at once) and two styles of variable sized/directioned text, or print or plot in different colors and densities.

Other features include Measure, Enlarge, Reduce and Rotate commands. MichTron's

TRIMbase (\$150) data management system lets you handle large amounts of data, enter names, addresses, personal or business details, and generate custom reports, both as tables and as free text. The program also provides special relational functions for cross-file interactions: condense, break up, merge, subtract and join files.

In Journey to the Lair, adapted from the arcade game Dragon's Lair, you'll help

Dirk the Daring try to save Princess Daphne. The Dragon's Lair disk is \$29.95,

as is the video laser cable, but the entire package costs \$49.95.

Karate Kid II (\$39.95), based on the film, pits Daniel against increasingly powerful opponents. Features include one- or two-player options, a MIDI-compatible soundtrack, joystick or keyboard options and realistic sound effects.

If you think about it, what else could R.A.I.D. (\$39.95) be but a program debugger? Features include a mini-assembler/disassembler, full screen editing capability, tracer options, copy, fill and move block commands, breakpoints you can reset and two screen displays to keep program and debugging activity isolated.

Shuttle II (\$39.95) is -- what else? a space shuttle simulator. Control the shuttle while docking an orbiting satellite. Maneuver the astronaut while he makes repairs and takes the satellite back to the shuttle for further inspection, then fly the shuttle back to Earth and land.

Match Point (\$39.95) simulates every aspect of tennis with accurate graphics and scoring, as well as a 3-D playing screen. With three levels of play, Match

Point features a stadium full of fans, line judges, a score board -- even ball boys. Use your mouse, joystick or keyboard to play.

Perhaps the most exciting new MichTron product is the Realtizer digitizer (\$199.95 -- originally the Print-Technik Video Digitizer), which allows color and 16-gray-level images and lets you load and save pictures in NEOchrome and DEGAS formats.

When you're done with all these products, organize them with Super Directory (\$39.95), which reads your disk directories, recording their files, lengths and

other attributes. Add personal comments and categories, sort, display and print organized directory lists. A disk library can hold 9,000 entries.

MichTron
576 South Telegraph
Pontiac, MI 48053
(313) 334-5700

MUSIC SEQUENCER

MIDIsoft Studio, a flexible, easy-to-use line between the ST and any MIDI-equipped instrument, features fast real-time record, playback, overdub, rewind and fast-forward. It has 32 independently controlled polyphonic tracks and a capacity of more than 80,000 notes per song, and you can record or play from any point in the piece using autolocate.

\$99
Passport Designs, Inc.
625 Miramontes Street
Suite 103
Half Moon Bay, CA 94019
(415) 726-0280

CHILL, THEN SERVE WITH SILICON CHIPS

FTL's Micro Cookbook has hundreds of recipes and a complete cooking database program that can search and retrieve recipes by ingredient, category and more. The program can give suggestions for leftovers or new entrees, and you can add your own recipes.

Features include menu planning, portion sizing, calorie control and automatic preparation of shopping lists.

\$49.95
FTL
6160 Lusk Blvd.
C-206
San Diego, CA 92121
(619) 453-5711

GRAPHIC ARTIST 1.52

The new version of Graphic Artist provides a print queue and includes more printer and plotter drivers, as well as improved driver editors that let you support virtually any dot-matrix printer (including 24-pin printers, but excluding color printers printing in multiple colors), laser printers (except Postscript) and plotters. Also, the last mouse coordinates typed are displayed

when new coordinates are typed in. Other features include improved pathname syntax checking, printing tips and more precise text margin alignments.

\$199.95
Progressive Computer Applications
2002 McAuliffe Drive
Rockville, MD 20851
(301) 340-8398

THREE CLASSIC COURSES

The Famous Course Disk: Volume II features three of the most difficult courses in the world: Turnberry in Scotland, the Inerness Club in Ohio and Harbour Town in South Carolina, for use with Accolade's Mean 18 golf simulation.

\$19.95
Accolade
20833 Stevens Creek Boulevard
Cupertino, CA 95014

Xx ST-TRANSFORMER UPDATE--Reprinted From MICHIGAN ATARI MAGAZINE by permission.

By John Nagy

DAREK MIHOCA's ATARI 800-in-an-ST-Program WILL BE RELEASED with ATARI's approval!

NEIL HARRIS, spokesman for ATARI, has agreed (in a public message on the GENIE ATARI SIG) to allow both USE and DISTRIBUTION of the ATARI code within Darek's emulator. The permission is contingent on Darek's PUBLISHING the SOURCE CODE for his emulator, so that other programmers may be able to add their efforts. Neil says the object of this move is to increase the likelihood of a truly versatile, full-speed emulator.

As it stands now, the ST TRANSFORMER uses largely custom routines modeled after the ATARI ROM, with some code grafted into the program at startup by a port of the TRANSLATOR DISK (or, in another version, they are already within the emulator program). That's what ATARI had said that Darek could not legally do.

At the BUFFALO ATARIFEST in late April, two user groups showed Darek's "ST TRANSFORMER" in operation. The author sent both the GENESEE ATARI GROUP (G.A.G., Flint, Michigan) and the WESTMORELAND ATARI COMPUTER ORGANIZATION (W.A.C.O., North Huntingdon, Pennsylvania) copies of the public domain emulator

for demonstration only. Interest at both tables was brisk despite the uncomplete state of the program and the current slowness of execution (20%-40% "normal" speed depending, on the program). ATARI tried to ignore the demos.

WACO members quizzed ATARI reps over the actual status of the TRANSLATOR, which was sent to all registered user groups for free distribution. Sandy first said that it WAS NOT SENT and remained ATARI'S property, then admitted that she didn't know for sure. At issue was what restrictions (if any) can now be put on the uses of the disks after years of free distribution.

An intriguing facet of the conflict appeared when a program called XLFIX, available for sale in ANTIC MAGAZINE's public domain library, was found to work

as well or better than the original ATARI disk. There are several other translators and operating systems available (both in the public domain and commercially - BOSSXL, NEWELL OSN, etc.). It appears that ATARI would first have to legally assert ownership and control of ALL the "translators" in order to get any legal claim against Darek for using one or more of them in his 800

emulator.

The dark prospects of long and possibly unsuccessful legal action, together with petition drives, newsletter editorials, and comments running in most major telecommunication services and magazines - all in support of the ST TRANSFORMER - now seem to have gotten through to ATARI.

In May, Neil Harris went on record saying that if Darek would only put his program source code in the public domain for further development by other programmers, then ATARI would give their permission for use and distribution of their operating system.

Darek Mihocka was unwilling to release his source code as public domain, for he would then have given up any rights to his efforts. Fortunately, ATARI softened their position, changing their demand to simply the PUBLISHING of the code, with the rights to his work remaining with the author.

Darek had previously contacted several other major ATARI-interest magazines about the possibility of their publishing the TRANSFORMER and source code in copyrightable form, but was turned down by each. The main reason was ATARI's vocal objection to the project and its legal questions. However, Neil stated in his May 15th messages that ANY magazine would be satisfactory, and that a formal proposal letter of permission would be sent within days. Richard Frick of ATARI called to confirm this on May 20.

Darek will have the consent needed for any interested magazine to publish and distribute the ATARI ROM with the emulator, as well as any parts of DOS and BASIC that may help. Availability time, publishing timetable, and even which magazine will offer the program can only be guessed at. It is clear that wherever it is printed, ATARI wants no restrictions on distribution (i.e., ANTIC and its "no BBS" rule). Frick indicated that ATARI could influence ANTIC on this issue for this particular program if neccessary.

All the flap hasn't slowed Darek's progress on the continuously developing project. He added SOUND, GTIA graphics, DOS MENUS, JOYSTICK CONTROL, and yes, PLAYER-MISSILE graphics to the already fairly capable emulator. The PLAYER-MISSILE routines were completed and donated by another sympathetic programmer. Speed improvements continue to be made.

Throughout the months of discussion on the subject, Neil Harris and company at ATARI kept asking "Why would anyone want to use 8-bit software on an ST?"... Perhaps a much better question is "WHY NOT?". WACO and other user groups WANT an emulator to provide SOME kind of link, however flawed, between the two products of ATARI CORP.

Distribution of a successful emulator disk by ST dealers might be all some 8-bit owners need to convince them that it is time for a system upgrade- or at least assure them that an upgrade in hardware won't mean an instant loss of 100% of the software they have grown with for years.

Supplied by the CHAOS BBS (517)371-1106 From Zmagazine Issue 53, May 25, 1987

AS of this writing, ANALOG COMPUTING has agreed to publish something in thier AUGUST/SEPTEMBER Issue. We will keep you informed.

Xx A FEW MINUTES WITH RANDY MOONEY by Frank Walters, T.A.C.O. BELL BBS

...did'ja ever notice---those bulletin boards that go wee-wah.. wee-wah..
wee-wah.. when you connect? That really annoys me. I wish all modems went
weeeeee like mine. Half the time they don't even connect anyway.

...did'ja ever notice---those bulletin boards that don't do anything when you
connect? They make you hit RETURN a bunch of times before anything happens.
That's a pain in the neck. Nobody answers a telephone that way, they always
say 'hello?' or something like that. Why don't all bulletin boards say
something like 'hello' when they connect, and not make you hit a bunch of keys
before they say anything? It doesn't seem polite to me. I don't like to call
them back, I'd rather call a friendlier place, one that answers the phone and
says something.

...speaking of answer, did'ja ever see those bulletin boards that just send out
a bunch of garbage like a foreign language and make you hit RETURN before you
can understand? We're in America and I think bulletin boards should speak
English and not some foreign language. I think it's just sloppy programmers
that can't figure out what language the caller is going to use. The modem uses
the right language, why not ask the modem instead of the caller?

...ya know what really bothers me? Did'ja ever see those messages that you try
to read and at the end of the message there are about 33 carriage returns and
the whole thing scrolls off the screen before you can read it? I think there
ought to be some kind of law or something that everybody who writes messages
would have to read their own message and if they don't understand it then they
would have to delete it.

...did'ja ever see---those silly twirling cursors on some bulletin boards?
Did'ja ever capture for a long time and see how much extra garbage goes into
the buffer just from those silly cursors? Even worse, did'ja ever try printing
them? Twirling cursors really bug me. There oughta be some kind of law that
only allowed twirling cursors with the expressed permission of the caller.

...did'ja ever notice---those cutesy menus that give you no idea what anything
is? I mean, why can't all bulletin boards use 'G' for Goodbye? I've seen Off,
Quit, Land, Terminate, and even Bye. Why does every sysop complain about
dropped carrier and then make it so hard to log off? There ought to be a law
that certain commands are sacred and can't be touched: Download, Upload, Time,
Messages and Goodbye! Even those Ataris use Yell instead of Chat.

...did'ja ever notice---those people who write long messages that are continued
on the next message? Did'ja ever notice after reading all those words that you
have no idea what they were talking about? I never read any messages that are
continued anymore. People who write those messages don't have anything
important to say, they just like to see their words on the screen or maybe just
like the typing practice.

...did'ja ever download---a big long file from a long-distance board and the
file didn't run? I like to have my friends call the long-distance board and

download the long files and then give them to me only if they work. I wish I had more friends. I wish I could be allowed to erase those bad files from the sysop's disk so other people wouldn't have the same problem.

...doesn't it bother you---that some bulletin boards change the filenames so you don't recognize the download list and you download all the same files as last week but with different names? Maybe the sysop does that 'cause nobody uploads and it makes everybody think he has a lot of different files. I always

wondered about that. Maybe somebody uploads them that way so the sysop will think he is getting something new and lets the caller have 'blackbeard privileges' or something.

...'handles' are a pain in the neck. I never could think of a good handle and am embarassed whenever I log-on a new bulletin board and the last question is 'What is your REAL NAME?'. I never know what to say because I already used my real name. Should I make up a real name different from the one I used at the beginning? One board I logged on asked for my real name first. I thought that

would be easy so when it asked for my 'Handle' I just answered: NONE. I left 2 messages from:NONE and it kept asking: 'NONE, what is your command?' Then when

I logged off, it said 'Thank you for calling NONE'. I felt real foolish. I don't like bulletin boards that make me feel foolish. I usually don't call back. I never could leave E-mail on those boards because I never could figure out who to send the mail to.

...did'ja ever notice---the sysops that complain the most about callers disconnecting are the ones that have boards that disconnect from you for no reason? Really! Is it polite to tell me after I fill out a long questionnaire that I have 9 minutes remaining and then while I am trying to find out where everything is located, I see a message that says 'Time expired, disconnecting and it hangs up? Then the next time I call back I have a nasty note from the sysop that says I let my time run out. That really bugs me. I didn't set the time limit, he did. I didn't disconnect, his board did. Why is he so mad at me?

...I could probably run a bulletin board better than most of these sysops and maybe I will some day. It's probably pretty easy. All I need is a BBS program and a couple of extra disk drives, make up my own rules and post messages around that I am open for business. What's so hard about that? Some of these guys think they are some kind of a god or something.

That's all the time I have for now. I wish I had more time, you never seem to have enough time for all you want to.....